



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, December 19, 2007

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PHOENIX WOMAN CHARGED WITH SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD AND FALSE STATEMENT

PHOENIX - Laura Calleen Reeves, 47, of Phoenix, was arraigned today in federal court for Theft of Government Funds and False Statements. Reeves, indicted by a federal grand jury on December 5, 2007, allegedly stole \$43,730 provided to her by the Social Security Administration (SSA) by continuing to receive SSA disability benefits even though she was no longer eligible for the benefits.

The indictment alleges that from January 1, 1997 through February 28, 2006, Reeves continued to receive SSA disability benefits for work disabling conditions but was not eligible for them because she owned and operated floral, craft and painting related enterprises full time from her home. The indictment also alleges that on March 13, 2003, Reeves knowingly made a false material statement on a SSA form by falsely stating that she was then suffering from multiple disabling conditions that entitled her to continue to receive SSA disability benefits even though she was no longer disabled nor eligible for SSA benefits due to her home-based business.

Reeves was released by the court pending trial, currently set before U.S. District Judge Roslyn O. Silver on Tuesday, February 5, 2008. A conviction for Theft of Government Funds carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a conviction for False Statements carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison. Each offense also carries a maximum fine of \$250,000. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Silver will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General. The prosecution is being handled by Frederick A. Battista, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-07-1328-PHX-ROS
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-257(Reeves)

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